GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:381
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2007
PROTECTION OF LIONS
Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan;Nikhil Kumar Shri

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the carcasses of some lions/Asiatic lions/cubs were recovered recently from the lion sanctuaries in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the effective steps taken by the Union Government for the protection and conservation of lions in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI A.RAJA)

(a), (b) & (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a, b &c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 381 REGARDING 'PROTECTION OF LIONS' DUE FOR REPLY ON 30.4.2007.

(a) & (b) Yes, Sir. As informed by the State Government of Gujarat, carcasses of 9 lions have been found in Gir Sanctuary area during the month of March 2007. Three of the lions died of natural causes while 6 lions have been killed by the poachers.

(c) Steps taken by the Government for protection and conservation of lions in the country are as follows:

i. Consequent upon the recent reports of incidences of poaching of lions in Gir area, the Ministry had constituted a Committee on 03.04.2007 comprising of Regional Deputy Director (Northern Region), Regional Deputy Director (Western Region) and Joint Director, Wildlife, in the Ministry, to look into the matters of protection strategies, constraints and to suggest steps for improvement to check recurrence of such incidents in future. The Committee has been asked to submit its report within a month.

ii. State government has been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around Gir protected area.

iii. Four Wildlife Regional Offices located at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai have been alerted for smuggling of any lion parts.

iv. Legal protection has been provided to wild animals including lions against hunting and commercial exploitation under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

v. Sensitization courses have been organized for the officers from Para-Military forces, Customs and Revenue Intelligence by Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

vi. Financial and technical assistance is extended to the State government under. Centrally Sponsored Scheme, viz. Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the state for providing effective protection to wild animals including lions.

vii. The lion has been included in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby affording maximum protection to the species. The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has been amended and made more stringent. The punishments in cases of offences have been enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that are used for committing wild life offence.

viii. Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been empowered under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to apprehend and prosecute wildlife offenders.